

Message Text

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53-S
ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 INR-07 INRE-00 NSC-05

NSCE-00 CIAE-00 /048 W
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R 241241Z FEB 75
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3309
INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON ENGLAND

CONFIDENTIAL ADDIS ABABA 2166

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR ET IT
SUBJECT: THE EVACUATION OF ITALIAN NATIONALS FROM ERITREA:
PROGRESS REPORT

REF: STATE 40666 NOTAL

ITALIAN COUNSELOR HAS SHARED WITH US STATUS OF HIS EMBASSY'S
EFFORTS EVACUATE ITALIAN NATIONALS FROM ERITREA TO ADDIS ABABA
AND FROM ADDIS ABABA TO ITALY. SALIENT FACTS CONVEYED TO US
FEBRUARY 24 FOLLOW;

1. ITALIAN GOVERNMENT SENT MILITARY C-130 AIRCRAFT TO
ETHIOPIA WHEN IT INITIALLY BECAME CLEAR EARLY THIS MONTH THAT
MANY ITALIAN NATIONALS IN ERITREA WOULD HAVE TO BE EVACUATED.
ITALIAN GOVERNMENT REASONED THAT MILITARY AIRCRAFT MORE SUITABLE
THAN CIVIL AIRCRAFT IN ASMARA ENVIRONMENT SHOULD RESCUE OPER-
ATION PROVE NECESSARY. ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, DECLINED
TO PERMIT MILITARY AIRCRAFT INTO ASMARA AND C-130'S WERE FLOWN
TO ADDIS INSTEAD, WHERE THEY REMAINED UNTIL FEW DAYS AGO.

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ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT APPARENTLY MOTIVATED BY OBJECTIONS TO "MIL-

TARY" RESCUE OPERATION ON ONE HAND AND CONCERNED OVER STRONGLY ADVERSE IMPACT UPON ERITREAN ECONOMY OF WHOLESALE DEPARTURE OF ASMARA ITALIANS.

2. ITALIAN EMBASSY HERE CHOSE NOT TO INSIST ON USE MILITARY AIRCRAFT AND EVENTUALLY PERSUADED THE EPMG TO PERMIT ERITREAN ITALIANS WHO WISHED TO DO SO TO DEPART FOR ADDIS VIA EAL. ROUGHLY 2100 ITALIAN NATIONALS HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THIS PERMISSION AND HAVE LEFT ERITREA TO DATE.

3. ONCE IN ADDIS, HOWEVER, EPMG CONCERNS OVER ECONOMIC LOSS INHERENT IN THESE DEPARTURES ONCE AGAIN ASCENDANT AND IT TOOK FURTHER EFFORTS OVER SEVERAL DAYS TO OBTAIN ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT AGREEMENT FOR THE DEPARTURE OF EVACUEES FROM THE COUNTRY. WHILE EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE ITALIAN EMBASSY AND EPMG IN COURSE, LATTER STALLED ON EXIT VISAS.

4. EPMG FINALLY AGREED TO ALLOW ITALIANS TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY. EIGHT HUNDRED PLUS HAD DONE SO AT THIS WRITING AND ITALIAN EMBASSY EXPECTS NUMBER TO CROSS THRESHOLD OF FIRST 1000 WITHIN NEXT DAY OR TWO.

5. ITALIAN EMBASSY OF VIEW THAT EPMG'S DECISION IS FUNCTION OF OVERALL POLICY DETERMINATION BY "DIRG" TO PROCEED MILITARILY TO REDUCE THE ERITREAN INSURGENCIES AND TO SUBORDINATE TO THAT OBJECTIVE BOTH THE CONDITION OF CIVILIANS (NOT JUST FOREIGNERS) IN ERITREA AND THE IMPACT OF SUCH MILITARY OPERATIONS AS MAY PROVE NECESSARY UPON THE ERITREAN ECONOMY (CF REFTEL).

WYMAN

NOTE BY OCT: DISTRIBUTION PER MR. HOGANSON, S/S-O.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EMERGENCY EVACUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ADDIS02166
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750064-0836
From: ADDIS ABABA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750220/aaaaarrp.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 40666
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAY 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <22 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE EVACUATION OF ITALIAN NATIONALS FROM ERITREA: PROGRESS REPORT
TAGS: PFOR, AEMR, PINS, ET, IT
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006